Public Opinion and Immigration Policies in Five EU Countries.

Accounting for (In)Consistency between Immigrants Selection and Integration Policies and Citizens’ Attitudes.

by

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Abstract:

In liberal-democratic polities, the question “who makes immigration policy” evokes the more specific question of to what extent those policies mirror the preferences of a majority of citizens, or rather those of small interest groups, or national constitutional or justice principles. In this paper we focus on the policies of immigrants selection and models of immigrants accommodation. Departing from an empirical basis about citizens inclinations, we analyse the module on attitudes towards immigration of the European Social Survey, carried out in 2002-2003. We focus on public opinion attitudes (if any) in some major countries of the EU, namely Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom, which are chosen according to their size, the relevance of their models of immigration policy and/or welfare state, and their history as immigration destinations. On that basis, we compare public opinion preferences with the policies being implemented, and we supply interpretations of the degree of consistency between both levels. In the first place, we consider attitudes and policies a propos the selection of immigrants according to their origin and/or resources. Second, we analyse attitudes and policies with regard to assimilationist and multiculturalist integration models.


1. INTRODUCTION

Citizens’ predispositions towards immigration policies constitute, plausibly, the expression of attitudes towards migrations with the greatest political relevance. It is plausible to suppose that the (pre-political) perceptions of the outcomes of immigration in the economy, the culture and the coexistence of the host society may exert an effect on party competition and in the processes of policymaking and implementation. Nevertheless, we postulate that attitudes towards policies in this field translate the more basic perceptions and evaluations citizens have of those phenomena into more elaborated demands and support for both political proposals and interventions. Thus, we regard orientations to immigration policies as an intermediate link between citizens’ basic, generic attitudes towards immigration and the political behaviour they may to exert influence on those issues.

Nevertheless, paradoxically, this is still one of the less known aspects of attitudes towards immigration.¹ That is why an important novelty of the Module on Immigration of the 2002-2003 European Social Survey (ESS) lies on its question-batteries intended to tap orientations towards the basic elements of immigration policies: immigrants admission and integration. These questions solely tap “predispositions” to immigration policies, but not “evaluations” of the actual existing policies.² Nonetheless, the information about

¹ See also 1997 and 2000 Eurobarometers (Jackson et al. 2001; Thalhammer, 2001). At the level of governments and political elites, it is particularly useful the work of Wodak (2000), which analyses comparatively politicians’ discourse about immigration in several countries European.

² We escape on purpose the term “preferences” in order to avoid suggesting a firm will that, in the field of immigration policies, is still inexistente for most of the population in countries with a short experience as host countries. Our hypothesis is that most Spaniards and Italians have not formed meditated and firm “preferences” in this realm yet, being still changeable in the face of opinion leaders. For this reason we
predispositions in this field can be compared to the policies that governments actually formulate and implement, weighting up to what extent the former may be consistent with latter.

The ESS, promoted by the European Science Foundation and the European Commission, is born with the explicit aim to establish a standard of quality in sampling design and in the implementation of fieldwork in order to warrant the data are of optimal quality and allow for comparisons among countries. Certainly, many countries collect systematically individual and/or household data by means of either statistic institutes or other agencies. However, generally those data are hardly comparable (Riba and Cuixart 2003). The ESS has as an objective to cover those shortcomings through the realisation of a bi-annual survey easing comparative research, by putting much care, for example, in the trans-cultural equivalence of the meaning of the questionnaires (European Social Survey, 2002).

In this communication we describe and briefly comment preliminary results of the ESS with regard to orientations to immigration policies, which we have classified into three groups. In the first section we examine citizens’ inclinations with regard to the selection criteria applied to the admission of foreigners, paying attention to the attitudes towards foreigners in accordance to the European character – or otherwise – and the economic power of their origin countries, as well as to the importance attributed to selective criteria of immigrants according to considerations of a material sort. Subsequently, in the second section we analyse predispositions relative to the models of integration policies for the resident immigrated, observing those, more or less formed or volatile, expressed in the face of typical views of assimilationist and multiculturalist policies. In the last section, by contrast, we focus on the recognition or denial of certain social rights to migrants, including that of stay in the host society. We start each section by comparing attitudes to each subject in the selected countries, subsequently exploring the degree of coherence between citizens attitudes and the policies implemented by their governments.

choose the terms “predispositions” and “inclinations”. As a consequence, we think that a great deal of responsibility falls on policy-makers, who in this domain ought not to assume “preferences as given”. Furthermore, in Italy and Spain, the potential of influence of opinion leaders around the immigration issue seems huge. Not only because of the attitudinal ambiguities and inconsistencies we have found, but also because the public debate has been much less intense and much more superficial than in other societies.
The comparison of the population attitudes with governmental policies makes us to ask ourselves “who makes immigration policy”. When there is an agreement between government and citizens, it seems that everything works democratically like it could be expected following from either a classic theory of democratic representation or a Schumpeterian model of democracy in which, to keep in office, politicians attempt to satisfy the passions of a sufficient majority of the electorate. Although one can also wonder whether the cases of consistency are not the product of policies that, sustained along decades, have shaped those attitudes till make them agree. Nevertheless, obviously, the scenarios of discrepancy between government and citizens attract much more attention. In the face of such settings, one may advance the hypotheses that the government is lead by an illustrated elite that exacts its own criteria upon the population. Or that the government lets itself to be influenced by pressure groups that only represent minoritarian parts of the population.

To explore the possible correlations between evidence at the micro and the macro level, we focus on some of the major countries of the European Union, namely, Germany, Spain, Italy, Great Britain and Sweden. We have chosen these countries in accordance to their size, the relevance of the empirical models of integration they undergo, and/or their models of welfare state, as well as their history as immigration destinations. Thus, Germany, Great Britain and Sweden have received large immigration flows from decades ago, whereas Spain and Italy from mid-1980s only. The three former countries also supply very developed welfare states – albeit different among them – in comparison to the countries of Southern Europe. Furthermore, it is usually considered that Sweden – over all – and Great Britain carry out policies of multiculturalist integration, while a “differentialist” policy has prevailed in Germany (Inglis 1997). In turn, Spain (Aja 2000; Colectivo Ioé 2000) and Italy (Triandafyllidou 2003) have not defined a nation-wide model yet.

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3 We also plan to include France, the traditional archetype of the model of “assimilationist” integration (Brubaker 1992). Nevertheless, by the end of March 2004, the French data for the ESS were not available yet. We hope to be able to incorporate them to this analysis soon.
2. **ATTITUDES TO ADMISSION POLICIES**

The admission or refusal of immigrants constitutes one of the basic axes, and certainly the most obvious one, of any immigration policy. Albeit not necessarily by this order, the questions of how many, who, and how are involved. No doubt, the issue most often publicly debated it that of quantity. By contrast, the issue of “who”, which entails a possible application of “selective” criteria, has hardly been discussed in countries with little experience as host countries such as Italy and Spain. Nonetheless, this is an old issue in settler countries such as Australia, United States and Israel, as much as in those countries in which a law tradition of *jus sanguinis* has prevailed, such as Germany. The immigration policies of these states either ascribed preference or hindered the inflow of immigrants according to considerations such as phenotype (“race”), language, religion – often presented in terms of “nationality”—and working skills. The problematic nature of these measures lies on the fact that, as they are discriminatory and even racist, they clearly contradict the principle of equality on which Western social and political systems are founded. Hence in some countries those policies have been reformed, either revoking them or covering them up (Brubaker 1990; Barry and Goodin 1992; Freeman 1995; Monar 1997; Lustick 1999; Joppke and Rosenhek 2001; Joppke 2003). More recently, the echoes of this debate have reached countries such Italy and Spain, with a relatively short receiving experience, in which the Islamophobic views of some social thinkers have drawn some academic and media attention. Finally, the “how” would encompass questions such as whether legalise or not irregular immigration, and the justification of the policies of preferential quotas for certain countries and working skills profiles.

The ESS observes citizens’ attitudes regarding the “how many” and “who”. A question-battery taps citizens’ predispositions to the admission de foreigners seeking to live in their country, according to the wealth of their origin societies and whether these societies are European or not. The questions are worded in terms of the amount of immigrants considered to be acceptable depending on those characteristics. Graph 1 shows the rate of interviewees in favour of allowing the arrival of many or some people coming from each type of country. We compare the figures of each of the five selected countries with the average of those five countries and the average of twenty European countries whose data...
Public opinion and immigration policies in five EU countries were available by the end of March 2004 (weighting the number of cases according to the weight of each country population on the total of each grouping).

Source: European Social Survey, questions D6-D9 (see the questionnaire in the Appendix).

By and large, the people coming from wealthy countries are received with a more warm welcome than those coming from the poor, especially if they are European, with a rate of support between 55 per cent in Spain and 79 per cent in Sweden. But they are not received much more badly if they are not European, with rates of support between 51 per cent in Great Britain and 75 per cent in Sweden. However, the degree of support decreases remarkably in almost all the countries if the immigrants are people coming from European
countries poorer than the host country, with rates of support between 47 in Spain and 83 in Sweden. And when the origin societies are poor countries from outside Europe, the support reduces even more almost everywhere, ranging from a support of 44 per cent in Spain up to 81 per cent in Sweden.

Therefore, for one thing, it becomes clear that in almost all the examined countries, as well as on the averages of the groups of countries, the support for the arrival of people coming from wealthy countries is quite larger than that for the poorer countries, with negative perceptions falling on them – as they are associated in the popular imagery, for example, to criminality (cf. Guiraudon and Joppke 2001). Nevertheless, it is worth to point out some further details. Sweden is a flat exception to this pattern of preference for the wealthy, since it is the single country in which citizens express a preference for the people coming from poorer countries rather than those from the wealthy countries. By contrast, Italy is the country in which the preference for citizens of wealthy countries is more unadorned.

Secondly, it deserves attention that Sweden is the country with the most open attitudes to the hosting of immigrants, while Spain and Great Britain are the most reluctant. The Spaniards’ attitudes partially can be attributed to the fact that Spain has underwent for two decades one of the largest unemployment rates in the West, although the circumstances in 2002 were no more the same. Furthermore, it can be pointed out that the Spanish working class yields a rather strong perception of ethnic competence in the jobs and housing markets, as well as for public services (Sóle and Parella 2003).

Thirdly, and perhaps more importantly from the point of view of the European integration process, it attracts attention the small relevance attached to the belonging to a European country (McLaren 2001), however its economic situation being. For this sharply contrasts with both the insistence to foster a feeling of belonging to Europe from the part of most of the political elites and the main opinion leaders, along with the process of European

\[4\] However, these attitudes are especially curious because of a very limited empathy ability, if we take into account the recent migratory experiences of hundreds of thousands of Spaniards. More generally, Jackson et al. (2001) have shown the existence of a statistical association between social class and prejudice against immigrants, the working class showing the largest prejudice.
integration, and with the European feeling expressed to surveys by the populations of some countries (for example, the Spaniards stand out among those declaring a strong European identification; see Díez-Medrano 1995). Thus, for example, Italians do not regard any difference at all between citizens from either European or extra-European wealthy countries. The countries in which the difference between immigrants European and no-European is more perceived are Germany and Great Britain, but even so, it is a difference of solely five per cent points. Less surprising is the exception of Great Britain, where governments and opinion leaders as much as citizens have used to sustain “euro-sceptic” attitudes (Díez Medrano 2003; Heath et al. 1999).

Graph 2. Importance given by citizens to selective criteria in five EU countries

Source: European Social Survey2002-2003, questions D13, D16 and D17 (see the questionnaire in the Appendix).

Graph 2 displays citizens inclination to the application of several more specific selective criteria. They are asked here to assess the importance that, from their point of
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view, ought to have some theoretically possible criteria upon scales from 0 thru 10. The criterion to which more importance is attached, with a score of 7,5 – on the average of the five European countries as much as in the average of the twenty European countries – is the immigrant disposition to adopt “the way of life in the country”, however this should be understood. The second criterion receiving more approval is having work skills “needed in the country”, with a mean of 6,7 for both sets of countries, thus suggesting an utilitarian perception of the immigrant as a factor of production. We have also considered the origin from countries with a Christian background, which seems to be one of the less esteemed criteria, with scores below 3,5 within the group of the five selected countries.

However, here some remarkable differences among countries are also noticeable. The countries in which citizens attach more importance to the immigrant’s disposition to adopt the “way of life in the country” are Germany and Sweden, while and those in which less citizens do so are Spain and Italy, although the differences are very small. The criterion of the work skills yields a larger variance, as while the German score 7,0, the Britt score 6,7, and the Swede solely score 4,9. Finally, the Italians are those attaching more importance to the Christian background of the immigrant – with a score of 4,5 – while the Swede are in the opposite extreme – with a score of 2,3.

A first lesson that can be drawn is that the vast majority of Europeans are prone to prefer immigrants ready to adopt the “way of life in the country”. However, this meaning of this indicator does not seem clear enough. One might wonder whether interviewees understand this question wording as that they would like immigrants to assimilate to their cultures or, in a less demanding attitude, that they wish immigrants to assume at least but sufficiently, the basic laws of the host societies, such as their constitutions, respect for human rights – including, where applicable, gender equality – an do forth. The proper interpretation seems to be the second. For it would be quite odd that Sweden, a country generally regarded as the closest to the multiculturalist ideal-type model, in which the state has developed integration policies favouring the participation of the different cultures, public opinion was more in favour of an assimilationist model, in which minoritarian ethnic groups are exacted the adoption of the way of life in the host country. Moreover, it would be not less of a contradiction that German public opinion appeared in favour of immigrants
adopting the way of life in the country while German governments have implemented a differentialist model (Ignis 1997; Wihtol de Wenden 1999).

Second, the emphasis given to the work utility of the immigrants suggests a restriction by which entry would tend to be allowed only to those people considered to useful for the economy of the country. Nevertheless, this would entail a serious exception in the materialisation of the moral and constitutional values of freedom and equality upon which open societies are based – the application of discriminatory criteria according to material interests (Barry and Goodin 1992). Public opinion favourable to a selection of immigration according to criteria of professional skills perceived as beneficent for the country agrees with the governmental policies of Germany, Great Britain and France, implemented for decades (OCDE-Sopemi 2004). However, in Spain and Italy it is noticeable a certain discrepancy between rulers and ruled, as the priority governments give in their “quotas” to workers with low qualification skills – destined to the agriculture, the building industry, catering and household service – disagrees with the importance citizens attach to a high educational level.

Third, in the Italian and Spanish cases it is noticeable a inconsistency between the scant importance attached to religion by the population and the actual admission policies that privilege people coming from countries with a Roman Catholic tradition such as Philippines. The state grants Spanish citizenship to Philippines after they have had a two years residence in Spain, whereas those coming from Morocco – mostly, with a Muslim background – are required ten years, in despite of the Northern Morocco having also been a Spanish colony and during a much more recent historical period (cf. Joppke 2003). In turn, Italy gives very large quotas to Philippines although irregular immigration coming from this country is scarce. This lack of symmetry is remarkable if the Philippine quotas and number of irregular migrants are compared with those of countries such as Albania, Morocco and Tunisia (Triandafyllidou 2003; OCDE-Sopemi 2003). For, according to the Italian government, the general rationale for immigration quotas given to specific countries is that these commit themselves to accept the repatriation of irregular migrants unwanted by

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5 Philippines passed to be controlled by the United States in 1898 [sic], after a war with Spain, while Spanish protectorate over Northern Morocco ended around 1956.
Italy. This suggests that the Roman Catholic Church has – either directly or indirectly – strong influence on Italian and Spanish immigration policies, in despite of the nominal secular character of these states.

3. INCLINATIONS TO MODELS OF INTEGRATION

Immigration policy does not only consists of admitting or rejecting immigrants entries, but also of what happens afterwards, how are they inserted into the society (Casey 1998). It is here that the polysemic term “integration” goes on to stage (Solé et al. 2002; Zapata 2001), ranging basically between a meaning of “assimilation”, in which immigrants give up their original cultures to adopt the dominant culture in the host society; a “differentialist” model, in which separated spheres are allowed to cultural groups different from the dominant group; and a “multiculturalist” meaning, in which immigrants can keep and develop their different cultural backgrounds without being segregated from the majoritarian society. In this section we explore whether western European are prone to an assimilationist pattern or, on the contrary, to a multiculturalist pattern, thus grasping their predisposition to be tolerant with religious and customary diversity.

Let us briefly define each of these concepts. The assimilationist model expects that minorities completely join the host society and political system through a process of individual change in which immigrants give up their different cultural backgrounds in order to adopt the hegemonic group culture. The differentialist model aims at avoiding ethnic conflict my means of keeping to a minimum the interactions between the majoritarian society and ethnic minorities. Compared to the assimilationist model, the differentialist model may allow, or even foster the development of parallel institutions that look after a minimum of the educational, health and/or cultural needs of the minorities. The multiculturalist model seeks that the individuals and groups with different cultural background can fully join the host society without loosing their peculiarities nor being denied full participation into the whole society. The process of full participation is regarded as the key for avoiding interethnic conflict. To reach the objective of full participation, it can be necessary to modify to a considerable degree the state institutions as to they serve
not only the social majority but also those belonging to different cultural and social milieus.

According to the descriptive results in Graph 3, half of the European (50% of the population of twenty countries) and a large share of the populations of the five selected countries (45%) agrees with the statement that it is better for a country if almost everyone share “the same customs and traditions”, which entails an assimilationist attitude. Nevertheless, solely Spain (55%) and Italy (49%) stand out above the average of the five countries – in the case of the former, also above the twenty countries mean). At the opposite side, the Swede and the German (36 and 39%, respectively) declare the least assimilationist attitudes. By contrast, in the face of the statement that it is better for a country if “there is a variety of people with different religions”, closer to the ideal-type multiculturalist model, only a minority of the European (34-35% of five or twenty countries) manifest an agreement. The larger rate of agreement is expressed in Great Britain (51%), standing out as the most open country by far, while the smallest rate is found in Italy (24%).

**Graph 3. Citizens Assimilationism vs. Multiculturalism in five EU countries**

Source: *European Social Survey 2002-2003*, questions D40 and D41 (see the questionnaire in the Appendix).
It is worth to comment the agreements and differences between these patterns of public opinion and the immigration policies developed by governments in the five selected countries. The Swedish integration policy is usually regarded as being the closest one to ideal-type multiculturalist model in Europe, as it seeks to supply a “freedom of cultural choice” (Ignis 1997; Wihtol de Wenden 1999; Gustafson 2002). The British is usually regarded to be multiculturalist, although the concept of diversity involved is based on the struggle against racism rather than on the setting of the conditions for a good organization of cultural groups (Wihtol de Wenden 1999). By contrast, the German policy is considered to be “differentialist” (Ignis 1997), while the governments of Spain and Italy have not clearly defined yet which model they prefer, if any (Aja 2000; Colectivo Ioé 2000; Triandafyllidou 2003). Even more, it could be contended that, while there is a de facto laissez-faire model, they integration policy tends to be assimilationist, hindering the preservation and development of the immigrants’ cultures.

Therefore, for one thing, although we saw that the Swede tend to consider that it should be eased the entry of immigrants ready to adopt “the way of life in Sweden”, nevertheless only a minority states that it would be better for Sweden that almost everyone shared the same customs and traditions. This suggests that the former statement is understood as referred to the political and rights system, but not to other aspects of social life. These attitudes are consistent with the governmental multiculturalist model, as the state Swedish seeks to foster the participation of the different cultures while exacting respect for human rights (for example, gender equality), to the Swedish political system (democracy), and even to the individual freedom of cultural choice (Ignis 1997; Gustafson 2002).

The attitudes of the German are similar to those of the Swede, as also the German seem to come to terms with the existence of different customs and traditions while preferring that immigrants adopt the “way of life in Germany”. However, the “differentialist” integration policy, which tolerates the formation of segregated cultural communities, but providing them with a minimum of governmental support, seems hardly consistent with that apparent tolerant disposition towards cultural diversity. The German integration policies have induced segregated communities that do not help the living together between eussiller and natives, and the large Turkish minority have for long been
considered as guest workers, without the right to acquire the German citizenship (Ignis 1997; Wihtol de Wenden 1999). This situation seems to have fostered the perception that immigrated people are not integrated. Furthermore, the German integration policy might also be explained by the German manner of building the political community, defined as based on an alleged common and homogeneous culture (Brubaker 1992; Joppke 1999). Anyway, was it true that the German are becoming more open to cultural diversity, this would be in line with the reforms of the law on citizenship and naturalisation initiated in 1999 and enforced in 2000. This legislative change eases naturalisation of foreigners settled in the German territory for long, and above all, to their offspring, introducing the principle of *jus soli* (OCDE-Sopemi 2001).

With regard to Great Britain, there seems to be less consistency between government and public opinion a propos multiculturalism. For a large majority of the Britons appears as favourable to the presence of different religions in their country, but the government applies principles of non-discrimination based on “race”, which hinder the recognition of religious differences, in particular of those of the “non-coloured” Muslims (Wihtol de Wenden, 1999). Yet Spanish and Italian cases do not stand out for their consistency either. Only one third of the Spaniards and a fourth of the Italians express an open predisposition towards religious diversity. In these cases a historically rooted prejudice of opposition to whichever religious difference might be intervening (cf. Minkenberg 2004). In the Spanish case, along with the general prejudice towards any form of heresy, kept alive during the protracted Franco dictatorship period, a specific old crusade prejudice against Islam seems also to be alive.\(^6\)

Moreover, the constitutions of both Spain and Italy enact that both states are secular, non-denominational. In this sense, in 1980 the Spanish government signed a treaty with Morocco by which it was agreed that the Spanish administration would provide Moroccan students with the teaching of Arabic language in primary and secondary schools. Nevertheless, the teaching of the mother tongue has not been generally considered

\(^6\) Another paradox is that Spain was actually a multilingual and plurinational state before the wave of immigration started, as nation-building cultural homogenising efforts in the 19\(^{th}\) and 20\(^{th}\) failed. However, the different Spanish nationalisms (Spanish, Catalan, Basque) still tend to hold homogenising pretensions for their imagined communities.
seriously, as solely some municipalities and very few schools have made arrangements with foreigners cultural associations and non-governmental organisations to actually teach Arabic in out of the educational curriculum. Furthermore, the Spanish constitution (Art. 16) stipulates that “Public powers warrant the right of the parents to choose a religious and moral upbringing in accordance to their own beliefs”, departing from a general recognition of religious and ideological freedom; a constitutional law on religious freedom passed in 1980 enacts that public powers ease the teaching of religion providing the public schools with the necessary means; and a 1996 agreement of the government with representatives of the Jew, Evangelic and Muslim faiths stipulates that lessons about those religions will be taught to the corresponding students. However, that agreement has not been enforced either (Aja 2000). In practice, Italian multiculturalism is not very different from the Spanish. For it does not stem as much from a nation-wide policy as from particular voluntary initiatives from the schools. Furthermore, there are still in the classrooms of the wide majority of Italian public schools, in despite of the nominal state secularity stipulated by the Italian constitution. Last but not least, let us recall our above-mentioned argument that in Italy and Spain it is noticeable also an inconsistency between the small importance – albeit larger than in other countries – attached to religion by the population and admission policies that privilege the immigrants coming from countries with a Roman Catholic tradition.

4. ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRANTS RIGHTS

In addition, the ESS taps the attitudes in the face of certain rights of the immigrants, regarding in particular the possibility of staying in the host country even if this might not be useful for the citizens’ interests. The desirability of conditional repatriation of immigrants is linked to negative perceptions of immigrants coming from less wealthy countries (see Guiraudon and Joppke, 2001). The important thing here is to explore to what extent foreigners settled in the country are recognised the same rights of the nationals. Graph 4 yields some western Europeans attitudes towards equal rights and expulsion. To begin with, two thirds of the European (66%) express an agreement with the statement that people that has come to live to their country ought to have the same rights that the nationals. The rate is
of 74 per cent in Spain and 86 percent in Sweden, but it is confined to 59 per cent in Germany.

Nevertheless, almost half of the European (47% in twenty countries and 45% in the five selected countries) agrees with the statement that if immigrants have been unemployed for a long period, they should be send down. Thus, those vaguely stated equal rights are conditioned in a manner that deeply undermines that ideal equality. Those more in favour of expelling the unemployed are the Britons (53%), the Italians (50%) and the Germans (49%), while only a small minority of the Spaniards (24%) and the Swede (11%) hold such an opinion. Some studies have pointed out that a perception exists that many immigrants take abusively advantage of the welfare state (OCDE 2004). However, the fact that Sweden is the country with the most developed welfare state and from which a largest amount of immigrants benefit, but it is also the country with the smallest rate of citizens wishing to expel unemployed migrants, makes us wonder about the validity of such an account. The perception that immigrants abuse of the welfare arrangements should not be explained with a straightforward account based on the actual relationships between immigrants and the welfare state, but rather the ways such relationships are portrayed by political elites in the messages they send to citizens. We would make advance the empirical hypothesis that the Swedish government has endeavoured a sustained and serious effort to explain its policy to public opinion, while other countries governments tend to follow public opinion as given, without any serious pedagogical efforts.
Furthermore, the consistency of the equalitarian beliefs of the European are also called into question by a third indicator. For a majority of the European (53% of twenty countries and 51% of five western selected countries) flirts with the idea of expelling the immigrants committing any kind of offence against the law. In this case, among the five major western countries, the highest rate corresponds to Italy, 70 per cent of its inhabitants being in favour of expulsion for any fault. Again the most consistent country is Sweden, where solely 21 per cent would support that political measure. Thereby, by and large, the
right to stay in the country, alike any citizen, even having committed some fault, is not well understood in most western countries yet.

5. **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In this communication we have seen that there are many differences among western countries with regard to attitudes to policies of immigration. Sweden appears with a much more open attitude to immigrants than any other country in Europe. Specifically, this attitude can be noticed in the attitude to the arrival of foreigners with a view to live in the country, in which Spain and Great Britain are more reluctant than the European average. With regard to the recognition of equal rights for immigrants and citizens and the repatriation of immigrants settled in the territory, Sweden appears as the most favourable country again, followed in this case by Spain, while Germany yields the strongest reluctance to such equality, Italy scores the strongest support for expelling immigrants involved in any sort of offence against the law, and British citizens are the most prone to wish repatriation of unemployed immigrants. Thus, generally speaking, the right to stay in the country alike any citizen is conditioned in a manner that deeply undermines the ideal equality most western Europeans like to attach to. This suggests that the right to stay in the country – even having committed some fault – is not well understood yet.

A major current issue in theoretical debates concerns the subject of selective immigration policy. With regard to the attitudes of western Europeans to selective policies, most of them give more support to people coming from rich countries than to those from the poor. The single exception to this is supplied again by the Swede, who seem to favour people coming from poorer countries instead. One thing western Europeans have in common is the opinion that immigrants should be ready to adopt “the way of life” in the host country, plausibly for they understand that somehow vague expression as respect for law and basic arrangements of their political systems as well as for human rights. Yet one surprising finding is that western European citizens do not make a significant difference upon the fact of coming from an European country or otherwise. This calls into question the relevance of European identification feelings that many of them express in the
Eurobarometers and other surveys, at least in what free mobility of European citizens is concerned. In addition, this is not very consistent with the European policies promoted by most involved governments. In turn, in the Italian and Spanish cases it is also noticeable an inconsistency between the small importance attached by the population to religion and governmental admission policies that privilege those immigrants coming from countries with a Catholic tradition.

A third subject is the policies of integration of immigrants. Here we find more variance both between countries and in the governments-citizens relationship within countries. Only a minority of the Swede holds the opinion that almost everyone in the country should share the same customs and traditions. These attitudes are fairly consistent with the governmental multiculturalist model. The attitudes of the German seem to be close to those of the Swede, as they also seem to accept the existence of different costumes and traditions. Yet their government differentialist policy, which tolerates the formation of segregated cultural communities, but without supporting them on an equal foot than the majoritarian society, does not seem to fully agree with that apparent multicultural predisposition. With regard to the British, the congruence between government and citizens does not seem stronger. For a wide majority of the Brits appears as favourable to the presence of different religions in the country, but their government applies principles of non-discrimination based upon “race” that hinder the recognition of religious differences not correlating with phenotype, such as those of Muslims. By contrast, only a minority of Spaniards and Italians express an open predisposition towards religious diversity. Nevertheless, the constitutional laws of both Spain and Italy enact both states being secular. The Spanish government has even signed a treaty with Morocco for the teaching of Arabic language in schools and an agreement with representatives of the of the Jew, Evangelic and Muslim faiths for their recognition on an equal foot than the Roman Catholic church. Yet in actuality no Arabic lessons and only Catholicism are taught in the schools with state financial support. The situation in Italy is not more congruent.

Finally, we try to tentatively answer the question on who makes immigration policies. We are tempted to advance the hypothesis that in Sweden the political elite makes the immigration policy. They behave as an enlightened elite that imposes their own criteria
on immigration policies, according to what they think is better for both their country and the immigrants. We suspect that the consistency with mass attitudes is the product of the sustaining of those policies along decades together with an effort of make them explained to the population. By contrast, in the cases of Italy and Spain, we have reasons to make the hypothesis that most of the political class behave as Schumpeterian politicians on this policy domain. Led by a concern for winning elections, they follow obsessively any small clue that polls seem to provide. Leaving aside the obvious moral problems this behaviour might entail, we would like to point out to another problem, which, if we were right, would be also a window of opportunity for different policies and politics. In the domains of selective and integration policies we are prone to think that the attitudes of Italians and Spaniards are rather “non-attitudes”. For we found a number of attitudinal ambiguities and inconsistencies, and for the public debate has been much less intense and much more superficial than in societies with longer experience as host countries. Hence we suspect that most Italians and Spaniards have not formed meditated and firm “preferences” in this realm yet, being still changeable in the face of opinion leaders messages. As a consequence, in this domain “preferences” ought not to be assumed “as given”, and thus a huge amount of responsibility falls on policymakers and opinion leaders.

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**Annex. Selected question items from the ESS 2002/03 Module on Immigration.**

D6. “To what extent do you think that [Country’s name] should allow immigrants from richer countries in Europe to come and live here?

D7. …allow immigrants from poorer countries in Europe?

D8. ...allow immigrant from richer countries outside Europe?

D9. ...allow many/few immigrant from poorer countries outside Europe”.

1 Allow many to come and live here

2 Allow some

3 Allow a few

4 Allow none

9 DK/NA

“Please tell me which importance should be attached to each of the following aspects in the decision of allowing or not to a person who has been born and always lived abroad to come and live here.

D13. First, which importance should be attached to that person was from a country of Christian background?

D16. And which importance should be attached to that person had the work skills needed in [Country’s name]?

D17. And which importance should be attached to that person was committed to the way of life in [Country’s name]?”

Scales ranging from 0 “Extremely unimportant” thru 10 “Extremely important”.

“Please tell me to which extent do you agree or not with the following statements.

D21. If immigrants are long term unemployed they should be made to leave.

D22. Immigrants should be given same right as everyone else.

D24. If immigrants commit any crime they should be made to leave.”
Public opinion and immigration policies in five EU countries

1 Agree strongly
2 Agree
3 Neither agree nor disagree
4 Disagree
5 Disagree strongly
7 Refusal
8 Don’t know
9 No answer

“Please tell me to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

D40. It is better for a country if almost everyone share the same customs and traditions.
D41. It is better for a country if there is a variety of people with different religions.

1 Agree strongly
2 Agree
3 Neither agree nor disagree
4 Disagree
5 Disagree strongly
7 Refusal
8 Don’t know
9 No answer

NB: As the questionnaire of the Module on Immigration is not available in the ESS web-site yet, we have had to provisionally translate the questions from Spanish. Despite eventual mistakes, we hope that this is at least useful as an orientation.